



## ***Council on Aging***

March 12, 2015 - **Minutes**  
181 Hillman Street, Building 9

### **Board Members Present:**

Bruce Duarte, Chair  
Patricia Costa, Vice Chair  
Esperanza Alejandro-Berube  
Inez Mello  
Jane Stott  
Mary Sullivan

### **Also Present:**

Debra Lee, COA Director  
Cynthia Wallquist, Community Services Director  
Pamela Amaral-Lema, COA Administrative Specialist  
Marisol Grant, Hazelwood Senior Center Coordinator

### **Excused:**

Virginia Morrison, Secretary  
Stanley Ociesa  
Joan Swain  
James Sylvia

**The meeting was called to order at 9:04AM by the Chairman, Bruce Duarte**

### **Secretary's Report**

Mr. Duarte asked the board members to read over the minutes to see if there were any questions. The board members agreed upon the approval of the minutes January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015 meeting.

**A motion to approve the minutes for January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015 meeting was made by Ms. Stott and seconded by Ms. Mello. The motion was unanimously approved.**

### **Appearances**

**Marisol Grant, Hazelwood Senior Center Coordinator-** Ms. Grant spoke about the Introduction to Spanish class she is teaching. She is using basic common words to incorporate in daily conversation. Ms. Grant stated the seniors are enjoying this class and she tries to make it fun and uplifting. Currently, there are seven seniors who are attending this class. Ms. Grant also spoke about the Valentine's Day party. She had Joy Perreira as entertainment with 58 seniors in attendance. Ms. Grant enjoys planning larger social functions and also educational presentations. There is also a "Name that Song" game that will be held on the first Tuesday of every month. There is now an open computer lab on Mondays where seniors can come in and have one to one assistance with computer questions. Ms. Grant spoke about the many exercise programs at Hazelwood, such as: Zumba Gold, Zumba Toning, Ballroom Dancing, Dancercise, Strength and Conditioning and Yoga.

Mr. Duarte and other board members stated how pleased they are with Ms. Grant's hard work and performance.

### **Old Business**

**National Depression Screening Day-** Ms. Lee stated 450 surveys were sent out with a letter explaining what the survey was. One hundred and forty surveys were sent back out of the 450 surveys. Ms. Lee was pleased with the response to the survey. More than half have identified a need for assistance. Ms. Lee stated she is in

the process of developing a task force to help meet the need of assessing and offering assistance for help. She has already met with Outlook Associates which has 17 clinicians on staff ready to help with identified needs. The surveys were sent out seniors who receive Meals on Wheels from Coastline Elderly Services.

### **New Business**

**Age Friendly City**— There was a Council on Aging Director’s meeting held at the New Bedford Council on Aging. Council on Aging directors from nearby towns, Coastline Elderly representatives, Mayor Jon Mitchell and Christina Connelly attended this meeting. Mayor Mitchell was an invited guest from Paula Shiner, CEO of Coastline Elderly Services. Coastline Elderly representatives and other COA directors asked Mayor Mitchell if he would consider a designation for New Bedford as an age-friendly city. Ms. Lee is in the progress of finishing the application for the age-friendly city designation.

**SNAP**- Coastline Elderly Services, Mass in Motion and New Bedford Council on Aging applied for a \$25,000 SNAP grant. Only two out of five eligible seniors in Massachusetts are currently receiving benefits. Through this grants and our collaborated effort with our sister agencies we hope to educate our seniors who are eligible for help to apply. The grant would help fund additional outreach hours to assist in this effort.

### **Chairman’s Report- Mr. Duarte**

Mr. Duarte ascertained a motion to send a letter to local state representatives to support the dollar increase from state funding to senior centers.

**Motion to approve a letter being sent to local state representatives to support a dollar increase per seniors to help senior center funding was made by Ms. Mello and seconded by Ms. Costa.**

Ms. Wallquist stated there was a survey sent out at each center regarding which activities do you enjoy. Which center do you live nearby? Do you live in a high rise? What would you like to see added to programming? What added services do you think are needed? This survey will aide in accessing what seniors want and need at the senior centers.

Mr. Duarte asked how the electronic system is working. Ms. Lee stated it is working well and accessing data is right at your finger tips.

**Motion to approve the Chairman’s report was made by Ms. Costa and seconded by Ms. Mello. It was unanimously approved.**

### **Director’s Report- Ms. Lee**

Ms. Lee spoke about the progression of Mental Health & Aging online training and stated most of the employees have finished the four online programs.

### **Director of Community Services Report- Ms. Wallquist-**

Ms. Wallquist spoke about the FY16 budget scenarios each city department was asked to prepare. Ms. Wallquist had to prepare a budget with a 7%, 5% and 3% budget cut to the Community Services funding. Ms. Wallquist has a budget meeting with the Mayor and financial department on March 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Motion to approve the Director of Community Services report was made Ms. Mello and seconded by Ms. Sullivan. It was unanimously approved.**

## **Correspondence**

The next Council on Aging advisory board meeting will be held on Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

**Motion to adjourn this meeting was made by Ms. Stott and seconded by Ms.Sullivan . It was unanimously approved.**